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FAITH AND MYSTICISM.

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I.

CERTAIN tendencies in the religious thought of the present render a consideration of the relationship between faith and mysticism not only pertinent but important. The idea of evolution, which germinated long before our era in the mind of Heraclitus, was in the last century given a soil to root in through its verification in biology and its application to the criticism of history. Its tremendous organizing power has left no department of human culture untouched. Not only has it knit hitherto unrelated sciences into the great web of universal science, not only has it displayed a prophetic gift by the disclosure of new fact, but it has also compelled the disintegration and reabsorption of old and once powerful systems of thought. Under its all-dominating shadow they have been converted into the rich mold that nourishes the growth of human knowledge toward something more stalwart and comprehensive than it has been before. Guided by the idea of evolution, the human mind has been bent upon the task of rendering the universe more rational. It has felt the zest of knowing and the mastery over things that reason can give. It has seen troop after troop of new facts surrender and fall into line under the spell of its new watchword. It has routed whole cohorts of superstitions and fears, which have waged a guerrilla warfare against human peace for centuries. But the conquests of reason have made it somewhat ruthless in assuming that everything is hostile and irrational which does not yield at once to its commands. Even the rational faculty may become intoxicated with its own achievements. And this is what we mean by "rationalism"—reason intoxicated by the sense of its power. The attempt to unravel the tangle of the universe and reel it off as a single thread may lead to an impatient snapping of the thread when the tangle refuses to yield. Evolutional philosophy, which is the form of much present-day rationalism, has shown some of this impatience.

Because it has been able to include a larger array of facts than its predecessors, it has sometimes been ready to deny facts which must be dealt with in an entirely different way. For example, because it has wrought the animism of the pagan world and Christian superstition into one evolutionary process, it has looked to see the whole fact of Christianity volatilize, leaving only a vaporous Unknowable. But the human spirit protests against this over-simplification of its world. It is in possession of more facts than have been dreamed of in this philosophy. In reply to the protest that matter and energy and life and mind cannot in their essence be known, and that therefore God and the meaning of the universe are unknowable, it points to its experience of God and bids philosophy be just to that. If the process of knowing which consists in linking fact to fact in an endless chain of causation cannot comprehend religious experience as being the grasping of reality, then there must be other ways of knowing.

Faith and mysticism are names for the two forms of experience to which appeal is made against an all-engulfing rationalism. Evidence that such a protest is one of the important signs of the times is close at hand. From within the pale of the Christian church we hear it in the watchword "back to Christ." The new rationalism manifest in our modern philosophy of nature and of history may menace the old rationalism which framed our theologies, but behind these theologies is a living experience. Back to the source of this experience and know Christ first-hand through the personal acquaintance of faith! Renew the living intercourse with God through his perfect embodiment, which is the material of all theology, and then insist that the philosophy of religion shall do it justice. This same trend of thought receives expression in the emphasis which the most recent theological literature places upon the importance of *personality* in religion. As examples may be cited the recent books of President King of Oberlin College. With him the way to knowledge of reality in its fulness is that of personal relationship, or faith, because the full reality is always personal. On the continent of Europe the Ritschlian school of theology carries similar tendencies to a greater length. Revolting not only from the old rationalism, which substituted the *fides quae creditur* for the *fides qua creditur*,

but also from the new, which tended to eliminate faith altogether, it has gone so far as to exile philosophy from the realm of religious truth, claiming for faith exclusive rights in dealing with the supernatural.

The new emphasis upon mysticism comes chiefly from non-Christian circles. The discussion of the "mind-cure movement" by Professor James, of Harvard, in his recent Gifford Lectures shows that mysticism is one of its important elements. Although he does not treat of this movement under the head of mysticism, yet it is evident that the verifications of the mind-curers' teachings, the experiences of physical and spiritual renovation, are often of a mystical type. Professor James has dignified what he calls the mind-cure movement by his treatment of it. Other modern "isms" of a less estimable sort—various esoteric cults and theosophies—display even more markedly the spirit of mysticism. They are wont to be regarded with more or less disdain, but nevertheless they have this in common with the more normal and substantial movement already noted in Christianity itself, that they are a protest against the negations of a too successful rationalism. Moreover, the importance of mysticism in the evolution of Christianity should be a warning against an indiscriminate condemnation of its modern forms.

It thus appears, on the one hand, that faith and mysticism may be coupled together as constituting a reaction against the rationalistic thinking of the century just past, and, on the other, that they are, in point of fact, divergent tendencies. Nor does this divergence consist solely in the proneness even of the vital piety of the Christian church to ignore the religious growths external to it. The Ritschlian school of thought at least assumes that there exists between the two a radical opposition of principle. It does not hesitate to condemn the mystical elements in the fruitful movements of Pietism and Methodism, and to ascribe their services to the presence in them of forces of a contrary nature. On the other hand, Professor James's analysis in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* leads him to say "that personal religious experience has its root and center in mystical states of consciousness."¹ Of the reality of such states he aims

¹ P. 379.

to convince us, and also "of the paramount importance of their function." Again he says, using the very terms we have employed, "faith-state and mystical state are practically convertible terms."²

These conflicting points of view furnish the theme for the present article. Are faith and mysticism contrary principles in the spiritual life? Do they ultimately yield different religions? Or are they, rightly understood, compatible; and if so, what is the adjustment between them which yields the soundest spiritual life and the fullest experience of God?

To secure a basis for comparison we need to return to the antithesis to rationalism which is common to both faith and mysticism. The existence of such an antithesis in current thought has been pointed out. How deep and well-grounded is it?

First as to *rationalism and faith*. What meaning shall these terms have for our present discussion? By "faith" I understand that attitude of free submission of the soul through which the reality and power of God are sought and found. By "rationalism" I intend to denote the absolutism of the discursive intellect—the insistence that the reasoning process is our only means of establishing reality.

At the outset it should be observed that, contrary to the usual conception, it is rationalism that is dogmatic in its attitude and faith that is empirical. The idea of faith which has just been defined, and which corresponds to the movements in religious thought already noted, does not involve the acceptance of a system of doctrine in its systematic wholeness. It says: "Back to Christ, back to the sources of inspiration; know for yourself that God is in the world; experience in your own life his creating and his recreating power; and then give this experience the best utterance you can." This utterance must be as full, complete, and systematic as possible. Truth is useful in proportion as it is clearly comprehended and compendiously stated. When our truth is carefully formulated, other things being equal, we are best prepared for action. When truth is fitted to truth in a systematic whole, we are most ready to shape a comprehensive plan. Nevertheless, the life is more than the system; it precedes it and is in turn its goal. The experience of God must always be profounder than its expression, unless that expression is

² P. 424.

to be hollow and unreal. Thus faith, as a distinct principle of life, is truly empirical. So far as it has failed to be this, so far as it has failed to make experience the foundation of doctrine and to hold doctrine subject to the verification of experience, it has been identical with rationalism, and has partaken of that spirit which the piety of the present finds to be fatal to its life.

At all events, in the face of the negations of modern science there is small hope for a rationalistic conception of faith. Science makes its appeal to experience, and refuses to speculate beyond the realm of possible experience. This is the reason for its convincingness. This is the strength of its veto power, when it deals with long-cherished beliefs. Its peculiar authoritativeness results from the fact that it has deliberately abandoned the realm of mere abstract logical possibility and estimates the worth of a system in proportion to its verifiableness. If now in our religious thinking we urge the claims of doctrine without regard to their verification in the experience of faith, basing them solely upon the thinkability of the dogma in question and upon the needs of our system, then we alienate at once minds imbued with the spirit of scientific thought. On the other hand, it is a distinct gain to recognize this degree of identity between the methods and spirit of science and faith. Each founds its beliefs upon experience; each regards verification as the final court of appeal.

But when science becomes agnostic philosophy, then we have that rationalism against which faith revolts, and then we have a dogmatism exactly similar to that with which theology has so often been reproached. This modern dogmatism, it is true, differs in one point from that of the ancient nature-philosophy and from rationalistic theology. It is not a dogmatism of system, but rather a dogmatism of method. That is to say, it is willing to submit its results and its system to correction and revision from experience, so long as that experience is *of a certain kind* and is regulated by a *certain method*. All other methods, however, and all other kinds of experience are ruled out. They do not give objective truth, but are fatally infected with subjectivism, and must ultimately lead to delusions as baneful as those which rigid scientific method has only just succeeded in dispelling.

A few words from Professor James will set forth what I mean by this dogmatism of method:

There are plenty of persons today—"scientists" or "positivists" they are fond of calling themselves—who will tell you that religious thought is a mere survival, an atavistic reversion to a type of consciousness which humanity in its more enlightened examples has long since left behind and outgrown. If you ask them to explain themselves more fully, they will probably say that for primitive thought everything is conceived under the form of personality. The savage thinks that things operate by personal forces, and for the sake of individual ends. For him even external nature obeys individual needs and claims, just as if these were so many elementary powers. Now science, on the other hand, these positivists say, has proved that personality, so far from being an elementary force in nature, is but a passive resultant of the really elementary forces, physical, chemical, physiological, and psycho-physiological, which are all impersonal and general in character. Nothing individual accomplishes anything in the universe save in so far as it obeys and exemplifies some universal law.³

The process by which the universe has been thus depersonalized is a familiar one. The concrete data of sense are broken up into qualities. From these certain ones which seem more essential are abstracted and the rest are ignored. These abstracted qualities are linked together as cause and effect, and thus we arrive at a single general law in the place of the many concrete individuals. So it comes about that the whole universe is conceived from the standpoint of motion, the narrower realm of living beings, from the standpoint of organizing spontaneity, and the still more limited sphere of conscious life, according to the laws of association of ideas. These groupings of vast ranges of fact under general laws are of the highest value. They give us synopses of the universe. They enable us to react on the outer world intelligently, because they deliver us from the bewilderment of details. We can deal with our environment handily by means of these compendia. Our actions become swift and sure. It is from the point of view of *controlling* our environment that the laws of science are valuable. They enable us to foresee events, to eliminate the injurious elements and secure the beneficial ones. They contribute to man's mastery over nature and the freedom of his spiritual life.

If, however, they are given absolute finality, if they are regarded as the sole expression of reality, then they impoverish the world and

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 119.

enslave man. The full palpitating reality of the individual is ignored; man is a thrall instead of a freeman. The human person, like all other particular manifestations of matter and force, is a vanishing phase of an infinite process. No act that he performs is original. No thought he thinks could be other than it is. All those sentiments and aspirations which are founded on the belief in himself as a free and permanent power are utter delusions. These delusions with respect to one's own inner life cannot indeed be dispelled, but with respect to reality other than the human person they can and must be. Much in the universe may be essentially unknowable, but that which is knowable, and accordingly that which is the only reality for us, is the aimless but relentless whirl of the infinite cosmic process.

But this absolutism which some scientists have been ready to claim for their view of the world is the result of forgetting two things. In the first place, there has been the tendency to overlook the fact that science obtains its results by abstracting certain elements from reality in its concrete fulness. To be sure, it takes what is most important from a certain point of view. But those aspects of things which it neglects may be from other standpoints of vastly greater consequence. In the second place, it seems to forget that there are such other standpoints, or at least that they may be used for the interpreting of the world about us. It is for this latter reason that we may accuse much of our so-called modern science with being simply rationalistic philosophy, and charge it with having escaped from dogmatism as to results only to fall into an equally fatal dogmatism of method.

Why then, we may ask, should the processes of intellect be held to be our only means of becoming acquainted with reality? Why may not the *way we react* on the world about us have something to do with the meaning we find in it? The impressions which things produce upon man are not limited merely to sensations, nor to the mechanism of cause and effect which the mind constructs out of our sensations. These impressions strike through to the deeper levels of our consciousness; they awaken the emotions and the acts of will which constitute our very life. But the emotional and volitional nature of man is the seat of his individuality. This is the realm where there is the least uniformity, where the peculiar and specific

are at their maximum. Evidently the kind of experience one gets on these levels will depend in part upon the attitude which prevails there. The heart and the will have something to do with detecting the meaning of the world. The pure in heart see God.

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel "I am I"?
Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Is the universe without a heart to us? Let us tune our own hearts to the right pitch and, when by sympathetic resonance it catches the tone of an infinite harmony, trust its message. Is the ceaseless toil and travail of the universe all to no purpose? Let us bend our energies toward realizing the best we know, and the seemingly aimless moiling will be revealed as a working together for good. "*Ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek*, and ye shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." These words, spoken not simply of petition, but of all willing, contain a theory of knowledge, a philosophy of life.

In such words as the foregoing faith bears witness to its experience. It does not controvert any of the conclusions of science that have been reasonably verified or have any hope of verification. It does not require science to prove any particular conclusion of its own. But it values its own experience as knowledge. It has experienced the reality and power of infinite love and righteousness. It has the conviction empirically verified that the world is the work of God and is realizing his ends. For science to deny the reality of these experiences of faith, and to insist that they are not knowledge, is pure dogmatism. So far as men of science take such an attitude, they fall victim to a superficial rationalism. The empirical attitude of faith is broader philosophically and leads to the profounder insight.

But not only does a sound philosophy justify the present reaction against negative rationalism in favor, not of a positive rationalism, but of faith; it even requires science to sign articles of friendship with the latter. The two are in fundamental respects akin, and ultimately science must recognize the primacy of faith. By the preliminary definition already given, faith is that attitude of free sub-

mission of the soul through which the reality and power of God are sought and found. Faith is thus primarily a function of our active natures, of the feelings and the will. Its experience of God is conditioned upon a moral attitude of the practical side of our being, just as the prerequisite of vision is facing the light. Now, taken a little more generically, faith might be said to be any attitude of the will that is the condition of getting knowledge. But when the conception is thus enlarged, it appears as the common ground on which science and religion meet. The will to believe is not only an indispensable constituent of the religious life, but it enters to some degree also into our most scientific experience. Let us consider for a moment the relation of the will to our knowledge.

The new psychology, says President King, has added one distinctive contribution of rapidly growing influence—the central importance of action. Body and mind we are made for action. Nor is this a rebound to a new extreme. The natural terminus of all experiences, bodily and mental, is action. For the very sake, therefore, of thought and feeling, one must act. The emphasis on action is indeed a protest against mere intellectualism or romanticism, but it is at the same time an insistence on the unity of man and on the *whole* man.⁴

What is recognized here is the reflex influence of the will upon our intellectual life. But modern criticism of knowledge goes farther and recognizes the will at the very foundation of the knowing process. Sigwart in his work on logic, from which I translate somewhat freely, says that in our purpose to know nature we implicitly make the presupposition that the perceptions which come to us from the outer world will conform to the requirements of our thinking and will submit to being arranged in a system of concepts connected according to law. This presupposition is a postulate and rests ultimately upon our will.⁵

That is to say, the whole fabric of science rests upon the will to know, and consequently upon the belief that the real world is of such a nature that it will lend itself to the forms of human reason.

Professor Le Conte⁶ draws a parallel between science and religion to show how both rest upon postulates, that is, faiths:

The necessary postulate of science, without which scientific activity would be impossible, is the rational order of the universe; and similarly, the necessary

⁴ Reprint from AMERICAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY, Vol. III, p. 302.

⁵ *Logik*, Vol. II, p. 19.

⁶ Essay in ROYCE'S *Conception of God*.

postulate of religion, without which religious activity would be impossible, is a moral order of the universe. As science postulates the final triumph of reason, so religion must postulate the final triumph of righteousness. Science believes in the rational order, or in law, in spite of apparent confusion; she knows that disorder is only apparent, only the result of ignorance; and her mission is to show this by reducing all appearances, all phenomena, to law. So also religion is right in her unshakable belief in the moral order, in spite of apparent disorder and evil; she knows that evil is only apparent, the result of our ignorance and our weakness; and her mission is to show this by helping on the triumph of moral order over disorder. We may, if we like—as indeed many do—reject the faith in the Infinite Goodness, and thereby paralyze our religious activity; but then, to be consistent, we must also reject the faith in the Infinite Reason, and thereby paralyze our scientific activity.

The antithesis between rationalism and faith is not an antithesis between science and faith. Rationalism is only an abuse of the authority of science. That authority rests upon a faith which springs from a pressing human need, and upon the abundant verification which the vigor of that faith has been able to secure for itself. It cannot be used to veto another faith which rests upon a profounder need and which has its own verification.

One point remains in the comparison of rationalism with faith, which is also important for determining the relation between faith and mysticism. In making the subjective basis for the experience of faith the will to believe, do we not cut loose from rational standards and so take ground inferior to rationalism? What is to exclude pure arbitrariness in matters of faith and to prevent one from willing to believe whatever one desires? This would be a real danger, were it not that the will as well as the intellect has its norm, its test of rightness and wrongness, of the true and the untrue. This norm is the simple sense of "ought," to which consciousness holds without exception every volition subject. Only the will to believe which springs from the ethical demands of our nature can be called religious faith. So long as our conception of God is the conception of a Being of infinite righteousness and love, so long will the faith by which we have experience of God arise only from consciousness of a moral need. That which lays hold of us with absolute authority and becomes the very voice of God to us, the very power of his presence, must be something that evokes in us *what ought to be*. The infinite would fall short of divinity were it anything less than that. The willing in which the

experience of God comes is moral willing. Faith, though it be but as a grain of mustard seed, is always a moral act. As soon as God lays hold of any heart, its moral experience begins. And no other attitude than a willingness to be made righteous can ever make possible the knowledge of God.

We have seen that faith makes its protest against rationalism on the basis of unique experiences, that these experiences involve the levels of our being which lie deeper than the rational faculty, and that the norm by which they are tested is the moral consciousness. Should reflection upon *the antithesis between mysticism and rationalism* yield the same results, then we might agree with the dictum already quoted, that "faith-state and mystical state are practically convertible terms."

In the first place, mysticism repudiates the veto of its experiences which rationalism would pronounce on the ground that they are not directly describable, and cannot be fully apprehended, by the rational faculty. On the contrary, those experiences on which it places the highest value are unique and ineffable. On this point there is a certain kinship between mysticism and faith. James names as the first characteristic of the mystic state *ineffability*.

The subject of it immediately says that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words. It follows from this that its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others. In this peculiarity mystical states are more like states of feeling than like states of intellect. No one can make clear to another who has never had a certain feeling, in what the quality or worth of it consists.⁷

Herrmann, on the other hand, who repudiates the notion that mystic state and faith-state are synonymous, says nevertheless:

On one point we agree, that the inner life of religion is ultimately something mysterious and incommunicable. No man can by anything that he imparts help another to possess that which is best in religion. The individual must experience it for himself as a gift from above.⁸

The coincidence in the descriptions given of faith and mysticism by men who have judged so oppositely as to the relationship between the two suggests the possibility that the views of each on this latter point should be somewhat modified.

It will be instructive to pursue the comparison farther. The

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 380.

⁸ *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*, p. 14.

second characteristic of mystical states mentioned by James is *noetic quality*.

They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain.⁹

But it is to insights which the discursive intellect cannot fully interpret that Herrmann refers when he says that the foundation of religious faith cannot be technically established, but must be found by each individual in a personal experience.¹⁰

In the third place, we find mystical experiences to be characterized, according to James, by *transiency*:

Mystical states cannot be sustained for long. Except in rare instances, half an hour, or at most an hour or two, seems to be the limit beyond which they fade into the light of common day. Often, when faded, their quality can but imperfectly be reproduced in memory, but when they recur it is recognized; and from one recurrence to another it is susceptible of continuous development in what is felt as inner richness and importance.¹¹

With this compare the words of Herrmann in description of faith:

The mood in which the thought "God is present" is the expression of a direct experience cannot, to be sure, permeate the soul even of the most religious every moment. . . . But in the soul through which this mood has passed its traces still remain and keep alive the longing for its peace.¹²

Herrmann would not, to be sure, regard faith as merely transient experience, but still its maximum is of this character. He says that the religious life reaches its maximum in the hallowed moments of immediate experience of God, and without these all the rest is so empty and vain that it simply does not deserve to be called religion.¹³

Finally, mystical states are marked by their *passivity*. Says James:

Although the oncoming of mystical states may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, as by fixing the attention, or going through certain bodily performances, or in other ways which manuals of mysticism prescribe; yet when the characteristic sort of consciousness once has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power.¹⁴

But on this point also we find a general agreement with Herrmann's analysis of faith:

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 380.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 381.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. iv.

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 381.

We are convinced that without the mysterious experience of God's *inworking* in the soul all religion would be nought. The nucleus of faith is the sense of being apprehended, wrought upon, changed by the power of God. To be sure, this activity of God in us, if it be real, must mean activity on our own part toward his ends, but its beginning is in passivity, submission, obedience.

We have taken these two authors for comparison, because they agree in their reaction against rationalism in favor of the authority of the spiritual life, and yet maintain contradictory positions with respect to the relation of the two great forms of spiritual experience, faith and mysticism. The one declares that faith-state and mystical state are identical; the other seeks to rule out mysticism from the life of faith. It would seem, however, that the absoluteness of these latter judgments requires some modification. On the one hand, the general resemblance between the characteristics of faith and mysticism which has been noted indicates that to insist on eliminating the mystical from our religion would mean an impoverishment of faith itself. On the other hand, the history of Christianity shows that an undue valuation of ecstasy, transport, and trance states, which constitute mysticism in its acute form, has been one of the great menaces of the religious life. There is need of a reconsideration of what these conceptions connote, if we are to estimate the forces they stand for intelligently and to avoid doing injustice to important religious interests.

An essential point in the discussion appears when James says that "personal religious experience has its root and center in mystical states of consciousness," and adds: "My own constitution shuts me out from their enjoyment almost entirely." This is equivalent to saying that personal religion is a matter of temperament, a type of experience that is possible or impossible according to the quality of one's nervous system. James has carefully guarded against a depreciation of the *worth* of religion, either from the moral or the metaphysical standpoint, on account of its temperamental character. Nevertheless, religion as *an experience of the divine* is something from which a large portion of mankind would be excluded for lack of the requisite nervous endowment. Hence his effort to persuade us that possibility and permission of believing "are all that the religious consciousness requires to live on."¹⁵

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

But if we revert for a moment to what has been said in developing the conception of faith, we shall see that certain of its elements have not been absorbed by mysticism. While it resembles the latter in giving knowledge of a unique and individual sort not easily communicable, and while this knowledge is acquired through a passive relation to a higher power, yet the two types of experience differ at important points. In the first place, mystical states are almost wholly affairs of the feelings, while faith relates both to the heart and to the will. The passivity in which the supernatural is apprehended is with faith an act of submission. The subjective conditions of the experiences of faith are not matters of temperament, but are determined by the will. For faith as for mysticism the spirit is like to the wind which bloweth where it listeth. But the conditions of its reception are not indeterminate and occult. "He that willeth to do His will shall know." The only function that the will can play in mysticism is to prepare the mind by exercises physical or mental for its ecstasy. In faith it is the will itself that is in the grip of the supernatural; and so, while there is passivity toward the higher power, there is, as a result, a broader and deeper activity on the side of human relations.

The fact that the uniqueness of faith's experiences depends upon an attitude of the will points to a second great difference between it and mysticism. As has already been said, our whole voluntary life is subject to the norm furnished by our moral consciousness, and it is only the attitude of the will which is determined by this consciousness that can be called faith at all. This must necessarily be, so long as faith is an experience in which God is found. Unless we surrender the hard-won conception of God as a purely moral being, we are bound to insist that faith, which claims to have communion with him, must be to some degree a moral posture of the soul. Thus in this second respect faith is distinguished from all states which are conditioned upon a certain temperament. One's personal constitution cannot exclude one from a moral attitude of heart and will, nor from the experiences which depend thereon.

There is enough in common between faith and mysticism to enable us to understand why they should both appear in the common rôle of protestants against rationalism. But, in the light of the distinctions just developed, one cannot hesitate as to the relative

value to be placed upon them with reference to each other. Faith, and not the mystical state, is the root and center of personal religious experience. It makes the same claim as does mysticism to insight and to immediacy of relationship with the supernatural; but it transcends the latter in being able to accredit its experiences before that bar of the human soul, the moral consciousness. And further, because its foundation is not in individual temperament, but in our common voluntary life, it is able to transmute its experiences, private and personal though they are, into a social force for the spiritualization of the human kind. The primacy, then, as between these two supra-rational modes of experience, belongs to faith. Does the heart, in humble submission to the best that it knows, find itself upborne from feebleness to strength and from groping to insight? Then it must needs say, "This is God." On the other hand, is it suddenly rapt away from things of sense and thrilled through and through with things ineffable? It has only a mystery to ponder. It was not the unspeakable words unlawful for man to utter that made Paul the prime minister of the kingdom of Christ; it was rather the strength made perfect in weakness.

By the two great tests of spiritual experience, moral authority and social regenerative power, we affirm the superiority of faith over mysticism as a way to knowledge of the supernatural. It is true, James explicitly submits the experiences of mysticism to the practical test, and inquires after their fruits for life. And this is a tacit admission of a part of the contention just made. But what he has failed to recognize is that the faith-state exists as something distinct from the mystical state, and that accordingly the subjective conditions of personal religious experience are such as to make it, not an affair of individual temperament, but rather a prerogative of all mankind.

On the other hand, so long as the primacy of faith is recognized, we have seen as yet no reason why the experiences of mysticism should not be tributary to it. A general similarity between the two has already been shown to exist. It is surely arbitrary to rule out the mystical altogether, even though its peculiar authority must be disputed even for the individual who feels it. The strange elation, the clarifying, doubt-dissolving insight, the poignancy, the tidal joy

of which the mystic strives to tell—these, it may be, are the initial or reinforcing experiences which secure that submission of the will whereby God is known.

II.

The radical difference between faith and mysticism, as already developed, consists in the fact that the former type of experience is impossible except as it includes a moral attitude on the part of the one who has it. This difference, then, is concerned with the subjective aspects of the two kinds of states. But an equally radical difference appears when we look for their objective grounds. Faith recognizes as its objective basis historical revelation. Especially in Christianity the source of the life of faith is that God is revealed in Jesus Christ. It is otherwise with mysticism. The chief motive for Herrmann's arraignment of mysticism is its rejection of the historical. "It is a form of piety," he says, "that feels the historical element in the positive religions to be burdensome and so throws it aside."¹⁶ And this is just what James has done in shaping the Gifford Lectures. At the very outset he puts aside, not only ecclesiastical, but all historical, religion. And this is not simply for the sake of limiting his material; it is because he does not consider them germane to his topic, which is personal religion. Historical religion—by which we mean religious life which is sustained by a historical revelation—is classed as second hand. That "acute" religion which is personal communion with God is sought elsewhere and found only in mysticism.

Both Herrmann and James are in reaction against rationalism, and both are emphasizing the supreme worth of a religion as a direct personal experience. But the latter is thereby led to reject the historical, and accordingly is left with nothing but pure mysticism as a type of positive experience of God. The former finds his ideal satisfied by the historical, and consequently rejects the mystical altogether. There is danger to religion as a social regenerative force in the one position, and in the other there is risk of quenching the very spontaneity of religious life which Christianity generates. In order to avoid both Scylla and Charybdis, let us ask the following questions: (1) Is it not possible for the experience generated by historical revela-

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

tion to be direct, personal communion between the soul and its God? (2) Is there not something truly mystical in the way historical revelation influences the individual, and are we not therefore bound to recognize the mystical, even in its more marked types, as a possible form of communion with God?

When we ask after the possibility of direct experience of God, we probe to that which both faith and mysticism declare to be ineffable; yet since with faith the inner conditions of the experience are not accidents of temperament, but a disposition of the voluntary life, it is feasible to delineate its general form.

The simplest exposition of the soul's claim to have communion with God is that it means the disclosure of a Being of absolute power and righteousness, the Supreme Reality and the Supreme Goodness. If after any fashion whatever the soul attains the vision of a Reality, whose authority over it is absolute, and from whom it receives a power that masters all other powers, then it knows the meaning of God. It matters not whether the vision flashes or dawns upon consciousness, nor whether the power lays hold upon the soul with violence or steals in like solar heat; if the command is that from which there is no dissent, if the mastery is such that it sets one free, they can mean nothing but the presence of God.

The finality of such experience cannot be questioned, and yet there is nothing in it which excludes the historical from being the form in which it is clothed. Nor would the finality be enhanced by the exclusion of the sensible or the historical. Mystical experiences, it is true, impress the recipients at times as being entirely divorced from sense, but they cannot escape the suspicion of having had as their accompaniment a widely diffused stimulation of brain activity. We will not dogmatize as to the extent to which psychic and cerebral processes condition each other, but the credentials of the supernatural are not to be found in the absence of physical concomitants. Both the sensible and the historical may be the envelope that enwraps truth transcending place and time.

But it is not simply true that the supernatural is not precluded from historical religion. On the contrary, the question should be raised whether the latter is not peculiarly the channel of supernatural influence. Leaving aside the miraculous in the realm of physical

nature as not germane to our particular theme and as being of subordinate significance in the question of personal religion, we ask by what avenues we may best hope to know the reality of such Supreme Authority and Power as alone can constitute the divine. Mr. James himself helps us when he declares that personality is the only full reality of which we have knowledge. To quote his words:

As soon as we deal with private and personal phenomena as such, we deal with realities in the completest sense of the term.¹⁷ Any concrete personal experience is a full fact, even though it be an insignificant fact; it is of the kind to which all realities whatsoever must belong; the motor currents of the world run through the like of it; it is on the line connecting real events with real events.¹⁸

The philosophical reflections leading up to such a point of view must be omitted as lying beyond the scope of our present inquiry. But assuming that personality, according to our best philosophical thinking, is the true reality, then it is a natural corollary that the revelations of a Supreme Reality, who is also personal, are to be looked for in personal lives.

The conceptions of revelation which are coming to prevail bear out this view. In religious history it is seen that personalities are the dominant forces. For example, the initiation of Hebrew religion as a unique spiritual force is not to be understood apart from the personal energy and faith of Moses. The forces which gave to that religion its maximum of specific gravity, so that of all the elements of the early Israelitish state it alone stood fast through the exile, were the personalities of the prophets. The inspiration of the Psalms, and above all of Job, is the autobiography they conceal. The voice crying to mankind to prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord was a human voice, behind which stood a rugged intense soul. The supremacy and divinity of Jesus are the supremacy and divinity of personality. The most casual letters of Paul and John are sacred scripture, because of the divine significance of the lives from which they come. It is in their personalities that the revelation of God is found. Those lives speak a message that is diviner even than the sacred words they wrote. Nay, they become the very power which recreates and vivifies the mind of faith. They *are* channels for personal communion with God.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 498.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

We are also justified in assigning this function to historical religion because of the central importance of the ethical element in faith. The Supreme Being is supreme because moral; the experience in which his reality is apprehended is moral. What can these facts stand for, if they do not mean that the ethical is the key to the supernatural? We have already emphasized the truth that personality is the only full reality of which we know. For this reason we cannot but believe that the Supreme Reality is personal. But therewith we have not given the characteristic mark of the supernatural. Psychology brings many aspects of personality under the scope of the natural, links them in with the series of causes and effects, and makes them parts of the outer, phenomenal world. That which gives personality its inwardness and originality is the ethical. Moral consciousness and moral effort—these are the regal facts in our experience. The pole of our being, the point where new energy is generated, the central glow of life, is the moral will. The ethical, then, is the supernatural. So far as that word has a positive meaning, it is derived from these most personal of all experiences, which give our lives whatever of independence and intrinsic value they may have.

But if the supernatural, which the soul seeks by direct experience to know, is moral life, then the claim of historical religion to be the form of that experience is emphasized. Through *moral* personalities the motor currents of the world run. This is the verdict of faith. The most commanding things in all the range of experience are characters. The most uplifting, energizing, compelling forces that impinge upon the human will are personal lives filled with moral energy.

But a defender of mystical as over against historical revelation might urge that what has just been said concerning the personal character of revelation really confirms the supremacy of mysticism. Faith in historical revelation, according to the account just given, becomes faith in other men's faith; in other words, it is precisely the second-hand religion which may for the present be ignored, instead of that first-hand religion to which we wish to penetrate. The prophets, the sons of God, the independent ones, must rest solely upon mystical experience. Now, it is not the animus of this essay to eliminate all mysticism from religion, but only to recognize the

normative character of historical revelation. Let us then simply ask: Is historical religion merely faith in other men's faith?

If this be so, it means that Christ himself misconceived one of the most essential points in religion. Christ surely meant to lead men to a personal relationship to God in the most intimate and direct sense. This is the central import of his preaching of the kingdom. The question of the social aspects of the Kingdom as Christ conceived it cannot be debated here. How far current messianism influenced his thought, how far he intended to forecast an ideal social community—these are important questions from other standpoints. But the whole spirit of Christ's religion would be missed if the kingdom of God be not understood to include God's kingship in the heart of the individual man. "Thy kingship come!" he taught us to pray. "The kingship of God is at hand," was his message. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; for lo, it is within you."

More fully still is this the significance of God's fatherhood. God the Father, man the son! All that human experience contains, of trust, fellowship, oneness of life, is drawn upon to express the closeness of the life with God to which he would lead man. "When thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee." God and the soul, the soul and its God! They are to live a secret life together. Individual, independent, personal religion has never received a fuller expression than this.

And yet in addition to this, or to secure this very end, Christ pointed men also to himself. "Come unto me," he said as he went about among them. "I will come unto you," he said in the days before his death. Both messages are enunciated with perfect clearness, and yet without the slightest sense of contradiction. The apostolic judgment: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, is borne out by the naïve and almost unconscious way in which these two messages of Jesus are uttered as meaning, to all spiritual intents and purposes, one thing. As we are avowedly on empirical grounds in our present inquiry, we need go no farther. To use a modern phrase of scientific innuendo, Jesus was a religious genius. He was consciously founding a new religion. And yet he deliberately

interwove God and the God-consciousness in himself into a single object for the faith of his followers.

But let us go farther and consider the actual results of this identification of the individual life with God and faith in his revelation. No one could withhold from the apostle Paul the right to claim a personal experience of God. But whose faith in God was ever so inextricably bound up with faith in Christ as his? The constant coupling of the Father and Christ in the epistles shows that the one was no less in his thoughts than the other. How entirely these two aspects were one in practical significance is seen in that wonderful summary of his inner life in 2 Cor. 4:6: "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darknesses, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is God himself, his own glory, that is known, and yet this knowledge was given in the face of Jesus Christ. When we think how to the great apostle God was all in all, the one in whom, not in a philosophical but in a very vital sense, he lived and moved and had his being; and, on the other hand, how Christ—his life, his love, his death—signified God to him, we understand that the things he united belong very essentially together. Here is a great religious personality, a life of maximum energy, nobility, and sweetness, whose ideality looms up with peculiar impressiveness before our time, being an original and full embodiment of traits which, though far less refined and harmonious, are the pride of the present age. But all these qualities are rooted in the revelation of God in Christ. His world-consciousness, his caste-demolishing faith in the equality of men before God, his undismayed execution of a world-mission—all of which must rank among the purest and directest inspirations that God has given to man—these all have their source in the personality of Jesus. Once more from the empirical standpoint we say that faith in historical revelation and personal experience of God may be most deeply one. Let us find a way to understand it if we can, but at all events let us not ignore the facts.

Again the very life of Christ furnishes us with suggestions as to the worth of historical revelation for individual religious experience. When he went into the synagogue at Nazareth, read the words, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me

to preach good tidings to the poor," and, closing the book, said, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," can we doubt that he was thrilled with the consciousness that God spoke to him in those words? And, in general, the close connection between the gospel of the kingdom and prophecy, which modern historical study has so helpfully exhibited, points to the thought that God revealed in the prophets wrought with we know not what other modes of divinity in producing the obedience of the Son of man. On the mount Moses and Elias, the voice and the cloud, are all parts of the transfiguring experience. The zeal of the evangelists to find fulfilments of Old Testament prophecy, however unskilled its manifestations may at times have been, rests back on Jesus' consciousness of the presence of God in the revelation of the Scriptures as a fact of personal experience to him.

It is then a general fact of the Christian consciousness that historical revelation puts the soul into direct relationship to God. Above all is this the experience that emanates from Christ. From him the truth and power of God flow into our lives. "The Christian," says Herrmann, "has in the personal life of Jesus a positive intuition of God." It is a misconception to say that such experience is merely faith in other men's faith. And this would not be said were it not that a wrong view of faith is ever at hand to confuse our thought. Mere intellectual credence may rest on other men's faith. But the faith which is a type of life must from its very nature be independent. It is an act of submission, it is true, but only to God. It is a state of dependence, but only upon the heavenly Father. Toward other men, except as divine authority and power are recognized in them, faith maintains the attitude of freedom. The very thing that Christ fought for was to free men from a religion which was merely faith in other men's faith. This is the judgment of Harnack as from the historical standpoint he views Christianity and Christ:

Jesus sought to kindle independent religious life, and he did kindle it; yes, that is his peculiar greatness, that he has led men to God, so that now they live their own life with him.¹⁹

Pharisee and Sadducee were set aside by Christ, the law and the theocracy were set aside by Paul, the hierarchical church was set

¹⁹ *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, p. 7.

aside by Luther, that men might come to God. The revelation of historical Christianity has been the bulwark of personal religion since the days of the prophets. To react against the principles of Christian revelation in the name of personal religion is to divide a kingdom against itself. Ecclesiasticisms and outworn dogmatic systems need in truth to be sloughed off, but the power by which this is to be done is pre-eminently the faith that in Jesus of Nazareth was given to men the very self-revelation of God.

We need not then convert faith into mysticism in order to further the cause of personal religion. But now let us return to our second question: Is there not something truly mystical in the way historical revelation influences the individual, and are we not therefore bound to recognize mysticism, even in its more marked types, as a possible form of communion with God?

President King in his Harvard Lectures of 1901, which now constitute the volume on *Theology and the Social Consciousness*, after drawing a distinction between the truly and the falsely mystical, says:

The truly mystical may all be summed up as simply a protest in favor of the whole man—the entire personality. It says that men can experience and live and feel and do much more than they can logically formulate, define, explain, or even fully express. Living is more than thinking.²⁰

If the truly mystical is a protest in favor of the entire personality, the converse statement would appear equally true, that there is something mystical in the activity of personality and the relation of person to person.

Personal relationships are something so familiar to us that at first thought it would seem to be taking all distinctive meaning out of the word "mystical" to apply it to them in general. And, in truth, it is necessary to pass beyond the casual aspects of personal relationship in order to detect their mystical quality. Much of what goes under the name of social and personal relation can be very definitely comprehended under the laws of habit or of paths in the brain substance, of association, of ideo-motor action. Although the energies that lie behind these laws are mysterious enough, the experiences themselves are entirely general, communicable, and capable of expression in

²⁰ *Theology and the Social Consciousness*, p. 77.

regular formulas. But there are influences which pass between man and man that cannot be thus grasped in general statements. Moreover, it is to these that we attach the higher value. In them the true personality, that unique thing for which the individual stands, is revealed. Personal relationship in the specific sense consists primarily in these hours of luminous insight into the sanctuary of another's being. Recall the lines of Arnold in "The Buried Life:"

Only—but this is rare—
 When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
 When, jaded with the rush and glare
 Of the interminable hours,
 Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
 When our world-deafened ear
 Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd—
 A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
 And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
 The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
 And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
 A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
 And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
 The meadow where it glides, the sun, the breeze.
 And there arrives a lull in the hot race
 Wherein he doth forever chase
 That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
 An air of coolness plays upon his face,
 And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
 And then he thinks he knows
 The hills where his life rose
 And the sea where it goes.

But after these insights have been had, they cast an interpretive light over the more ordinary and habitual intercourse. Acts that to another are opaque are to the seeing eye lit with the afterglow of the greater experience: a spirituality pervades the grosser substance of conduct. There is an aroma, a lilt and gleam to be caught from the prose of our common life, when once the inner sense has been anointed. This power of personality to kindle that secret fire of our nature, which when lit it is a holy ministry to nourish, is something not to be reduced to the grooves of law—it is mystical.

If a mysticism pervades the deepest relations of person to person, then, since revelation, as the theology of our time emphasizes, is

personal and is grasped only in the personal experience of faith, it follows as a logical deduction that there is a mystical aspect to the experience of God through historical revelation. But the general kinship between faith and mysticism has already been shown. What we seek now is actual verification of the union of the two in historical religion. Before asking after the presence of a mystical element in our own experience of revelation, it would be well to inquire into the place of mysticism in the great source of revelation, the Scriptures.

The appearance of prophecy in the life of Israel was characterized by phenomena which indicate mystical experience. At the time when Israel's fortunes are at their lowest ebb, and destruction of the people at the hand of the Philistines is impending, bands of men called prophets appear. They are the beginning of a new national-religious enthusiasm that, under the leadership of Saul, was to free the people of Jehovah from the yoke of the Philistines. What the psychological character of this new movement was is shown by the meeting of the newly anointed Saul with a company of these prophets. In 1 Sam. 10:10 we read: "Behold, a band of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them." Again in 19:20: "Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied." A second and third body of messengers came and likewise prophesied. At length Saul himself comes and is seized with the same spirit. Vs. 24: "And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and he lay down naked all that day and all that night." The phenomena, then, are a psychic atmosphere charged with excitement and enthusiasm—a sudden seizure of the individual whereby he comes under the influence of this atmosphere and delivers utterances, perhaps resembling those of the modern trance state. The cause of it all is assigned to "the Spirit of the Lord." As Professor Davidson says:

In early times God was conceived more as a natural than a spiritual force; his operation, even where he might operate on the ethical side of man's nature, was physical. Hence "spirit" connotes the suddenness and violence in the divine operation. When one is seen performing what is beyond man to do, or what is beyond himself in his natural condition, both to himself and to the

onlooker he appears not himself; he is another man, he is seized and borne onward by a power external to him—the Spirit of the Lord is upon him.²¹

We should not hesitate to call these crude and extravagant manifestations mystical. We have already seen that as religious experience mysticism must be held in subordination to faith. In the wide range of mystical phenomena there is much that can have no religious significance whatever. "Religious mysticism is only one-half of mysticism," says James.²² It is true that prophecy in its fully developed and most influential form is a very different thing from this early mysticism of physical ecstasy. It is the grand achievement of modern biblical criticism that it has set prophecy in its true light as essentially ethical religion. The prophet's arraignment of kings, priesthood, and people, his premonition of doom for the sinful nation, his assurances of hope beyond disaster, the whole message which he delivered as the will of God, rooted solely in the consciousness that Jehovah was the God of righteousness. But different as seed and fruit appear, there is a continuous process of development connecting them. The name "prophets" applied to the early enthusiasts is identical with that by which the later preachers of righteousness are known, and in some sense the latter have grown out of the former. Indeed, traces of the outcome are not entirely wanting in the crude beginnings. Although there is nothing distinctly ethical in the particular features of that early prophesying, yet the significance of the whole movement must have been ethical. It was a rallying of enthusiasm, courage, faith in Jehovah. It was an assertion of the national consciousness, out of which fruits for individual morality and religion were to grow. Jehovah, although then conceived of as bound up with the destinies of Israel regardless of the character of the nation, was still the guardian of morality, so far as it had become a distinct element in the national consciousness. The origin of the great prophets from the undisciplined wild enthusiasm of the earlier prophets will never be understood as a simple evolution, yet there is a continuity between the two. The all-important ethical character of later prophecy is indistinctly manifest in the earlier, and the question for our present consideration is: Does not the mysticism

²¹ HASTINGS'S *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Prophecy and Prophetism," p. 114.

²² *Op. cit.*, p. 426.

characteristic of the early phenomena frequently reappear in the later?

Professor Davidson²³ has connected with the accounts of Saul and the bands of prophets who were seized by the Spirit of God the fact that

the Spirit of the Lord suddenly carries Elijah away, one knows not whither,²⁴ and men fear it may cast him upon some mountain or into some valley; and how "with the hand of the Lord" upon him he kept pace with Ahab's chariots.²⁵ Again when Elisha was visited by the kings of Judah and Israel and Edom, seeking aid against Moab, he called for a minstrel: "And it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha," and he prophesied. "The hand of the Lord" appears to become a technical expression for the power by which the prophet is rapt away beyond his habitual self-consciousness. Music contributes to the inducing of the ecstatic state. It should be noted that the band of prophets whom Saul met prophesying were "coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe and a harp before them."²⁶

Of the greater prophets, Amos and Micah do not withdraw the veil from their personal experience; Hosea discloses to us how his revelation of God has grown out of the tragedy of his domestic love, whereby we learn that not mysticism but fidelity and faith fathom deepest into the things of God; while Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel relate the visions with which their prophecies began.

Consider for a moment the vision of Isaiah in the sixth chapter of his prophecy.²⁷ The predominance of the ethical in this experience is plain. Self-consciousness and will are not in abeyance. The frame of mind, though impassioned, is lucid. The revelation of God does not mean an absorption of the finite self. Indeed, it rather intensifies the distinction between the two. Over against the divine holiness the prophet's sinfulness stands out in his consciousness with woful clearness. The cleansing, the call of the Lord, the grateful, valiant response "Send me," are distinctly moral experiences. The call is an experience of faith, involving the manifestation of God to a submissive, willing heart and the active response of the life to the revelation.

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

²⁵ 1 Kings 18:46.

²⁴ 1 Kings 18:12.

²⁶ 1 Sam. 10:5.

²⁷ Isa. 6:1-8.

But it does not magnify the ethical in the narrative to ignore the mystical. The vision of the Lord, his thrice holy presence, the quaking foundations of the temple, the smiting sense of sin, and then the voice of the seraph saying, "Thy sin is purged"—these are all recounted, not in an allegorical or didactic spirit: they are real features of a profound inner experience, out of which came an intensification of energy, an enhancement of life for all future time. These results are conditioned upon that wonderful will of Isaiah, so full of spring and temper, ready in its submission to the perfect holiness, swift in its rebound in response to the divine question with, "Here am I; send me!" But this is not all that the story betokens. Something swept into the consciousness of Isaiah that day which converted the courtier into the prophet. The whole experience was a moral one. It did not carry him away from active life into a meditative retirement. On the contrary, it called him to a life of publicity and strenuous endeavor. But the initial vision bears the marks of mysticism nevertheless. Not that it is any better or more religious for that. Its significance is entirely determined by its fruits. It did not bring him any nearer God than Hosea was brought by the all too articulate experience of his suffering love. But its characteristic mystical tone should not on that account be overlooked.

The visions mentioned in the first chapter of Jeremiah are symbolical of his message. The account of the prophet's call is a plain narrative of the inner conflict between the appointment of Jehovah and his own sense of weakness. But when this struggle issues in a new consciousness of strength, when the word of Jehovah comes, "Behold, I have made thee this day a defensed city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land," then we recognize that enhancement of life in which the moral and the mystical unite. The sudden elevation of the personal energies to a new plane, distinctly moral though the experience is, always has something mystical about it. Jeremiah again gives us an insight into his prophetic consciousness in 20:7-9: "O Lord, thou hast enticed me, and I was enticed; thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed. . . . And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing and I cannot contain." Of

this passage Professor Davidson says: "There is nothing more than such moral constraint as was felt by the apostles in the early days of the church or by one now with earnest convictions."²⁸ But for all that, the mystical is there. The prophet feels himself carried on to his work of prophecy by a divine energy. This is not, indeed, without his consent. The act of will in which he struggles against the divine power ends in consent. His personality is not abrogated. And yet it becomes infused with a power not its own.

Passing to the prophet Ezekiel, we recognize that with him the vision has become a literary form. Even the vision connected with his call to the work of the prophet is elaborated in a somewhat studied fashion. And likewise in the following chapters the symbolical acts performed are shaped according to a literary and didactic purpose. But here and there a passage shows that living experience underlies it all, and that, too, of the more mystical sort. For instance, in the third chapter we read: "Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place. And I heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, even the noise of a great rushing. So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, and the hand of the Lord was strong upon me." The note of reality here seems unmistakable; the words are descriptive of the prophetic ecstasy.

One other aspect of prophecy may be referred to, although it carries us on to debatable ground. That is the element of prediction. Historical criticism has not eliminated prediction from prophecy. Detailed references to future persons and things are not given in the prophetic books, as was formerly supposed. But certain great events are forecast, and the fact that these predictions were correct had much to do with fixing the prophetic books in the Scriptures of the Jews. We cannot discuss explanations of this predictive power here, but can only suggest that the recognition of mystical experience as a frequent element in the prophetic consciousness affords a point of view from which it might be regarded. Even Davidson, who rejects Giesebrecht's theory of a faculty of presentiment, says:

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 116.

There may be obscure capacities in the mind not yet explored; and there may be sympathetic rapports of human nature with the greater nature around, and of man's mind with the moral mind of the universe, which give results by unconscious processes; and if there be such faculties and relations, then we may assume that they would also enter into prophecy, for there is nothing common or unclean in the nature of man.²⁹

The beginnings of the Christian church, though on an altogether different level from those of prophecy, have certain analogies with the latter from the point of view of our present inquiry. Here again there are mystical experiences of a marked type. The speaking with tongues on the Day of Pentecost seems clearly indicative of such states of consciousness. It was recognized by Peter as a reproduction of similar elements in ancient prophecy, and so as a fulfilment of the prediction of Joel. There was also something of extravagant enthusiasm and physical ecstasy in these manifestations, as with the first bands of prophets. Those speaking with tongues were taken to be full of new wine. But the gift of tongues was not an isolated phenomenon; it was widespread in the early church. The possession of it came almost to be regarded as a seal of conversion. The mystical experience which these phenomena give evidence of cannot therefore be passed over lightly in forming a conception of what communion with God may mean.

It is true that the more physical aspects of this new mysticism came to have undue prominence. Mystical experience, as has been repeatedly emphasized, does not contain its norm within itself. It must be measured by its fruits for the life of faith. Paul found it necessary to write to the Corinthian church that the gift of tongues was not from the Spirit of God if it led a man to say Jesus is anathema. His whole treatment of spiritual gifts in the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of First Corinthians aims to show that mystical experience must have ethical results or it cannot be thought to come from God.

But, on the other hand, Paul was far from denying that mystical states of consciousness might be a means of communion with God. He values the gift of tongues. "I thank God, I speak with tongues, more than you all," he says. Moreover, whatever this gift may have become later, its first manifestation at Pentecost was an event

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

of the highest ethical significance. It was unmistakably an outpouring of the *Holy Spirit*. Men were raised to another level of spiritual life by the influx of new power. The effect of that mystical experience is with difficulty singled out from the influence of Christ before that time and the daily life with God afterward, but it was indispensable, and was no less ethical than these.

But what is commonly referred to as the mysticism of Paul was not the gift of tongues nor the rapture of the third heaven, but the simple life with Christ. There had come to pass such complete union between him and the spiritual power which had been incarnate in Jesus, the *Holy Spirit*, that he could say: "I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me;" and again: "To me to live is Christ." It may be said that one of the marks of mysticism is lacking here, viz., *transiency*. It is true that the relationship between Paul and Christ transcended that of the merely mystical. It was a relationship of faith, an abiding experience in which the whole personality of the apostle entered. To the first of the passages just quoted he adds: "And that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me." The love and the final sacrifice of Christ are the interpretation of faith, and faith is the completest name—the apostle's own name—for the new life he is now living, which is, to use his own words, "the life unto God." But while his union with Christ is no transient ecstasy, the other characteristics of mysticism all color more or less his description of faith. His relationship to Christ partakes of the ineffable. It is so immediate and full that there is naught to say of it but: "For me to live is Christ." It is a state of profoundest insight. Consider how all the truths of the gospel are apprehended by Paul "in Christ." We are justified in Christ, we are sanctified in Christ, we have freedom in Christ. Finally, it is a state of passiveness and receptivity, not, to be sure, through suspension of personal modes of being, but through submission of the will.

In this very insufficient survey of some of the great events and characters through which Christianity finds God revealed, we have found in varying degrees elements of mystical experience. The limitations of the present article forbid us to make the inquiry more adequate. We must pause now to ask after the value and signifi-

cance of these elements. The question returns upon us: Do not the facts pointed out require us, after all, to concede that the religion of the great characters, those who have first-hand experience, is mysticism, and that all else is second-hand, merely faith in other men's faith?

I answer, No. The particular point of our inquiry in our last topic has been to discover the mystical in the experience recorded in Scripture, and consequently a false emphasis may seem to have been laid upon that which is really subordinate. If so, the balance must be restored again. The whole tendency of the mysticism we have found has been to subordinate itself to faith. In this very fact consists its religious worth. The transition from early prophesying to the great revelations of the later prophets consists in the gradually increasing dominance of faith. Instead of finding God solely in isolated phenomena of a startling character, the people of Israel came to see him in great personalities.

So with the early stages of Christian experience. The revelation of God is completer in the lives of Peter, John, and Paul than in the wonders of the Day of Pentecost. Moreover, Paul's religion is not mysticism in the sense that mystical modes of experience, in themselves considered, are all-important and central. They are simply aspects of something larger. The emphasis falls elsewhere, whether we look at his life as a whole or consider his teaching. That for which he counts all things loss is that he may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of his own, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. In spite of the mysticism which hovers in the words "gain Christ" and "found in him," the thought centers here about the more fully personal experiences of faith and righteousness.

But if historical revelation is none the less a religion whose essence is faith, because of the mystical elements it contains, neither does it render inferior the relationship to God which the man of faith may now have. What was said earlier in the discussion in regard to the directness and the immediacy of the relation to God that revelation affords remains unaffected by the specific forms in which that revelation comes. What is essential for communion with God is that the soul should stand in the presence of that which it must recog-

nize as the absolute authority and power over its life. But this it does when it is penetrated by the meaning of the life of Christ, and in a measure also when it is wrought upon by the spirit of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Paul. It is the peculiar property of faith, as it is of all living things, that it is able to generate its own kind. And so it is that the one life of perfect faith in God, wherever it does its regenerative work, tends to produce fulness of faith. Christ's work in man is the progressive fulfilling of his own prayer: "Even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

We have now already implicitly given a reply to the question to which we have so long deferred a direct answer. There is, indeed, something mystical in the power of historical revelation over the heart of faith. With Paul we have arrived at an experience that has for its objective ground the same realities that we ourselves have. And something of the Pauline mysticism is doubtless reproduced in every heart in which the Pauline faith lives again. If we cannot honestly say, "For me to live is Christ," yet we can say that when we do truly live, it is no longer our own living, but Christ liveth in us. God has helped us; he has laid hold of our hearts; what good there is in us is through submission to him; and our hope for the future is that he will never leave us alone. A sense of reconciliation is one of the marks of the mystical state recognized by James. But that is what the knowledge of Christ crucified has always wrought in the human heart. That is the freedom through submission, the strength made perfect in weakness, which forms the core of Christian experience.

Let us draw our conclusions concerning these two forms of personal religion.

We have seen that, just as something mystical pervades the profounder forms of all personal relationship, so throughout the Christian religion, which is simply personal life with God, there runs a mystical strain. Ineffable truths, solutions of the enigma of life not translatable into the forms of the discursive intellect, are apprehended in the life of faith. As James says, in the faith-state and in the prayer-state there is an actual inflow of energy. "In the communion with the Ideal, new force comes into the world and new departures are made here below."³⁰ These conclusions, which he

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 521.

sets forth as simple facts, are likewise the outcome of reflection upon the experiences of the typical Christian consciousness.

On the other hand, the more radical implications of his theory, that personal religion, as a thing founded on direct experience, is a matter of temperament, and that experience derived from historical revelation is not direct experience of God, must be set aside. The fuller name for the religious state, the one more adequate to the voluntary and moral elements essential to it, is not mysticism, but faith. The unique and striking forms of mysticism may result in an enhancement of moral energies. If so, they too must be counted as experience of God. But the purely mystical must always be held in subordination to the normative experience of faith. And this involves the recognition of the adequacy of historical religion; for the testimony of the Christian consciousness is that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God was given in the face of Jesus Christ.